

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CHINA'S EDUCATION DEBATE SHIFTS TO SCIENTISTS

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SUMMARY: FEBRUARY RED FLAG'S LEAD ARTICLE SHIFTS THE FOCUS OF THE EDUCATION DEBATE TO SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CIRCLES, CALLING THEM A SOURCE OF EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE CURRENT POLICIES IN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. THE ARTICLE CHARGES THAT SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS, TRADITIONALLY INSULATED FROM CHINA'S POLITICAL MOVEMENTS, HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY BLATANT IN RESISTING PARTY CONTROL. IT APPEARS THAT THOSE CHARGED WITH THE DEFENSE OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION POLICIES HAVE PREFERRED TO PURSUE THEIR ARGUMENTS FIRST IN THE RELATIVELY HOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNIVERSITIES BEFORE TURNING, AS THEY NOW HAVE DONE, TO TAKE ON THE NATION'S SCIENTISTS. ANY MOVEMENT WHICH

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SERIOUSLY INTERFERES WITH RESEARCH WORK, HOWEVER, RUNS THE

RISK OF HAMPERING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF CHINA'S AMBITIOUS MODERNIZATION GOALS. END SUMMARY

1. THE LEAD ARTICLE IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF THE CCP THEORETICAL JOURNAL RED FLAG SIGNALS A MAJOR SHIFT IN THE EDUCATIONAL DEBATE. WRITTEN BY A MASS CRITICISM GROUP FROM TSINGHUA AND PEKING UNIVERSITIES, IT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINGLES OUT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CIRCLES FOR JOINING CERTAIN PEOPLE IN THE EDUCATION FIELD IN "STIRRING UP A REVISIONIST WIND."

2. THE ARTICLE'S ATTACK IS SHARP, AND APPEARS TO BE FOCUSED ON CHINA'S RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS--THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ITS SUBORDINATE INSTITUTES. IT SPECIFIES A NUMBER OF AREAS WHERE SOME SCIENTISTS ARE RESISTING CURRENT REVOLUTIONARY POLICIES, INCLUDING THE GUIDING ROLE OF MARXISM AND THE "OPEN-TO-SOCIETY" METHOD OF RESEARCH INVOLVING MOBILIZATION OF THE MASSES. MOST IMPORTANT, IT CHARGES THAT THESE SCIENTISTS REJECT OUTRIGHT ANY NON-PROFESSIONAL--THAT IS, PARTY--CONTROL OF SCIENTIFIC BODIES.

3. LAST YEAR'S DECEMBER RED FLAG ARTICLE WHICH MARKED THE OPENING OF THE EDUCATION DEBATE SINGLED OUT UNIVERSITY SCIENCE FACULTIES AS A SOURCE OF REVISIONISM (REF C), BUT THEREAFTER THE DEBATE RAPIDLY BROADENED OUT TO COVER CHINA'S ENTIRE APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION. UNTIL THIS NEW ARTICLE, THE ONLY SPECIFIC MENTION OF SCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTES HAS COME IN SOME SCATTERED DEFENSE OF THE "OPEN-TO-SOCIETY" METHOD OF RESEARCH.

4. UNDERLYING THE ENTIRE DEBATE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN THE NECESSITY TO MAINTAIN STANDARDS OF RESEARCH ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT CHINA'S GOAL OF RAPID MODERNIZATION. THE ISSUE WAS FIRST BROACHED PUBLICLY IN A JANUARY 7 PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE (REF A), WHICH ARGUED THAT THERE WAS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE REVOLUTIONARY METHOD OF EDUCATION AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE "FOUR MODERNIZATIONS" (OF AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY). A MORE EXTREME ARGUMENT APPEARED IN A JANUARY RED FLAG ARTICLE WHICH CONTENDED THAT IN CASE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITICS MUST TAKE PRIORITY OVER PURELY ECONOMIC NEEDS (REF B).

5. CHINA'S SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN PROTECTED FROM DIRECT INTERFERENCE BY PARTY IDEOLOGUES. EVEN DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, THE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTES WERE SHIELDED FROM THE BURNT OF THE LEFTIST ATTACK. THUS IT IS NOT SURPRISING TO LEARN THAT SCIENTISTS

JOINED EDUCATION MINISTER CHOU JUNG-HSIN AND OTHERS LAST SUMMER IN WORKING FOR A MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TOWARD EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, A DEVELOPMENT REFLECTED PUBLICLY AT THAT TIME IN GREATER ATTENTION TO BASIC RESEARCH (REF D). IT APPEARS NOW THAT THE DEFENSE OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION POLICIES MAY HAVE CONCENTRATED FIRST ON THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE STUDENTS THERE, MOST OF WHOM OWE THEIR PRESENCE IN SCHOOL TO THE NEW ENROLLMENT POLICIES, WOULD SUPPORT THE PRESENT SYSTEM. NOW THAT THE ISSUE APPEARS TO HAVE REACHED SOME SORT OF RESOLUTION AND THE SCHOOLS ARE QUIETING DOWN, THESE SAME IDEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS MAY HAVE FELT IT TIME TO TURN ATTENTION TO THE SCIENTISTS.

6. THE RED FLAG ARTICLE IS NOT AN ISOLATED PHENOMENON. IN FACT, THE FOCUS OF SEVERAL OTHER ARTICLES IN THE SAME FEBRUARY ISSUE APPEARS TO BE REVISIONISM IN SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES, AND THE DEBATE IS BEGINNING TO BE REFLECTED IN THE REGIONAL MEDIA. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE, WE WOULD HAZARD THE GUESS THAT PARTY CONTROL AND SUCH NEW METHODS AS "OPEN-TO-SOCIETY" RESEARCH WILL BE REAFFIRMED, BUT THAT THE DEBATE WILL BE KEPT UNDER CONTROL AND WILL NOT LEAD TO PURGES OF PERSONNEL. THE DANGER EXISTS, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE CRITICISM IS ALLOWED TO DEVELOP TOO FAR, CHINA'S NON-MILITARY RESEARCH EFFORTS WILL BE HAMPERED, WITH CONSEQUENCES FOR THE EVENTUAL PACE OF CHINA'S PROGRAM OF MODERNIZATION.

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